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H. Talbot

AN
APPEAL
FROM
CLAMOUR TO COMMON SENSE,
&c.

AN
A P P E A L
FROM
CLAMOUR TO COMMON SENSE ;
OR
SOME ENQUIRY
INTO THE
DETAILS AND OPERATION
OF THE
REFORM
PROPOSED FOR
ENGLAND AND WALES.

“ Il semble qu'ils aient méconnu la grandeur et la dignité même de leur ouvrage : ils se sont amusés à faire des institutions puériles, avec lesquelles ils se sont à la vérité conformés aux petits esprits, mais décriés auprès des gens de bon sens.”

MONTESQUIEU.

LONDON :
JAMES RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY.

M.DCCC.XXXI.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

CHICAGO, ILL.

1900

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AN APPEAL,

§c. §c. §c.

AFTER the crowds who have lately sought for public notice by the pen, I feel that some excuse should be made for the presumption of a new attempt; and I am desirous of thus bespeaking the indulgence of my reader at the outset, by assuring him, that there has been, in putting together the few following pages, no premeditated design, merely to make a pamphlet.

It is no “*scribendi cacoëthes*,” no itch of scribbling, which has persuaded me to throw their substance into this shape,—no longing to fly my own little kite among the thousand which have, with more or less steadiness, floated, for some time past, upon the gale of political discussion,—no wish to add one more to the “infinite swarms of *calones*,” that “disorderly rout, that follow

the camp of literature, without coats to cover them;" and so overrun this land, when attracted by the plunder of some great question of public excitement. Far be it from me to under estimate the value of those productions of the day, (whereof, there are some few,) which, at such times, really contribute to assist the judgment of the nation with the light of reason or experience; but in aspiring to that class there are a crowd of feelings,—of doubt,—of diffidence,—of indolence, which tend to affect the resolution of one who is unaccustomed to the vicissitudes of the pursuit.

Nevertheless, these are sensations to which a man ought not at all times to yield; there are occasions when the questions to be decided are of mighty and universal public moment, on which no man is justified by such considerations, in withholding what might do service, either by facts or argument, and on which he is bound to contribute even his untried coin to the general subscription of ability or industry.

It is to the latter of these qualities alone, that the author of the following enquiry pretends, in any degree, a claim. No one will deny, that such an occasion as that above described, has at this time arisen. Yet the

reader (should there be those who have the patience to peruse this writing) must not expect an essay upon the question of Reform, or another of those packets of reflections upon its principles, or of arguments upon the Ballot, of which such multitudes have been already conferred upon the country. My course is less pretending, but, I hope, not less useful. I shall discuss not the general qualities even of the actual measure; but I humbly conceive, that a few facts collected, and compared, are not likely to be wholly unserviceable; and since I have employed some hours in examining many of its details, and their effects, with diligence and attention, I am desirous of offering to those who may have had less leisure, or less industry, the benefits of that application. Premising, however, that although, as I have said, it is not immediately to the principles of the Reform Bill that I desire to direct the notice of the reader, yet such a consideration of the details, as I propose to lay before him, must, of course, in many respects, and, in no small degree, affect those principles.

Wherever this is not directly the case, I shall no doubt be met by the Reformers, as others have been met before me, with their usual answer;—" Oh! but what does all

this signify? What matters it to the nation, whether this or that Borough be extinguished? What care the people about the question between Buckingham and Calne?"

Why, truly, it would matter little to the nation, whether an individual A. enjoyed his honours and his income, or B., or nobody at all; the people will care little, whether I have rather less property, and my neighbour somewhat more, and whether he enter my house in order to effect the transfer. But is it nothing to the eternal principles of moral justice?—Nothing to the great ends of public faith and equity?—Nothing by those high rules and maxims of political wisdom, which lay down the security of property and rights as the basis of all constitutions of society,—that men should be stripped at random of their antient and acknowledged privileges,—robbed, without an urgent necessity, or even an enquiry to ascertain it, of their most valuable rights,—and disposed of, according to the chances and caprices of a half-considered expediency? For my own part, I cannot believe, that the people at large, the sensible, intelligent, and reflecting part of the community of these realms, has been yet brought to view the subject with such shortsighted indifference. I am persuaded, that

though they be anxious for Reform, they wish to see it executed with justice and discretion.

On an occasion, and in an undertaking like the present, they have a right to demand more than usual care. They have a right to expect that those to whom it is entrusted, should use all efforts to obtain the means of proceeding with due knowledge and security. "It is not," says a great writer,* "in destroying and pulling down, that skill is displayed; your mob can do this as well, at least, as your assemblies; the shallowest understanding, the rudest hand, is more than equal to that task. Rage and phrenzy will pull down more in half an hour, than prudence, deliberation, and foresight, can build up in a hundred years. The errors and defects of old establishments are visible and palpable; it calls for little ability to point them out; and where absolute power is given, it requires but a word wholly to abolish the vice and the establishment together." "To make every thing the reverse of what they have seen, is quite as easy as to destroy. No difficulties occur in what has never been tried. Criticism is almost baffled in discovering the defects of what has not existed; and eager enthusiasm, and cheating hope, have all the wide field of

* Burke. Reflections on the Revolution in France.

imagination in which they may expatiate with little or no opposition.

“ At once to preserve, and to reform, is quite another thing. When the useful parts of an old establishment are kept, and what is superadded is to be fitted to what is retained, a vigorous mind, steady persevering attention, various powers of comparison and combination, and the resources of an understanding, fruitful in expedients, are to be exercised; they are to be exercised in a continued conflict with the combined force of opposite vices; with the obstinacy that rejects all improvement, and the levity that is fatigued and disgusted with every thing of which it is in possession. But you may object—‘ A process of this kind is slow.’ “ Such a mode of reforming possibly might take up many years.’ Without question, it might; and it ought. It is one of the excellencies of a method in which time is among the assistants, that its operation is slow, and in some cases almost imperceptible. If circumspection and caution are a part of wisdom, when we work only upon inanimate matter, surely they become a part of duty too, when the subject of our demolition and construction is not brick and timber, but sentient beings, by the sudden alteration of whose state, condition, and habits, multitudes may

be rendered miserable." "The true lawgiver ought to have a heart full of sensibility. He ought to love and respect his kind, and to fear himself. It may be allowed to his temperament to catch his ultimate object with an intuitive glance; but his movements toward it ought to be deliberate. Political arrangement, as it is a work for social ends, is only to be wrought by social means. There mind must conspire with mind. Time is required to produce that union of mind which alone can produce all the good we aim at. Our patience will achieve more than our force." "By a slow but well-sustained progress, the effect of each step is watched; the good or ill success of the first gives light to us in the second; and so, from light to light, we are conducted with safety through the whole series. We see that the parts of the system do not clash. The evils latent in the most promising contrivances are provided for as they arise. One advantage is as little as possible sacrificed to another. We compensate, we reconcile, we balance. We are enabled to unite into a consistent whole the various anomalies and contending principles which are found in the minds and affairs of men. From hence arises, not an excellence in simplicity, but one far superior, an excellence in composition. Where the great

interests of mankind are concerned through a long succession of generations, that succession ought to be admitted into some share in the councils which are so deeply to affect them. If justice requires this, the work itself requires the aid of more minds than one age can furnish. It is from this view of things that the best legislators have been often satisfied with the establishment of some sure, solid, and ruling principle in government; a power like that which some of the philosophers have called a plastic nature; and having fixed the principle, they have left it afterwards to its own operation."

Yet how is it with the united Reformers of 1831? While parish vestries require committees and enquiry to sanction their regulations; while not even ale-house licenses can be discontinued without a comparison of facts and of opinions; while, to reduce a few salaries, or to confirm the Civil List, demands a due measure of sedulous research; the whole representative system of the country is re-arranged, (to use no stronger term,) the whole Constitution of the Legislature is established on new and arbitrary rules, fixed by the impatient fancies of a few of the half-employed Members of the Government;—rights destroyed;—rights transferred;—rights created; changes devised which will in all likelihood

alter irrevocably the practical working of the Constitution ; and all without one real effort to supply the defects of present information, and without any other apparent object but that of stitching the plan together as rapidly as possible for use in an actual emergency.

“ They commit the whole to the mercy of untried speculations ; they abandon the dearest interests of the public to those loose theories to which none of them would choose to trust the slightest of his private concerns : they make this difference, because, in their desire of obtaining and securing power, they are thoroughly in earnest ; there they travel in the beaten road ; the public interests they abandon wholly to chance ; I say to chance, because their schemes have nothing in experience to prove their tendency beneficial.

“ We must always see with a pity, not unmixed with respect, the errors of those who are timid and doubtful of themselves, with regard to points wherein the happiness of mankind is concerned. But in these gentlemen there is nothing of the tender parental solicitude, which fears to cut up the infant for the sake of an experiment. In the vastness of their promises, and the confidence of their predictions, they far outdo all the boasting of empirics. The arrogance of their pretensions,

in a manner, provokes and challenges us to an enquiry into their foundation." " In the system itself, taken as a scheme for procuring the prosperity and security of the citizen, and for promoting the strength and grandeur of the State, I confess myself unable to find out any thing which displays, in a single instance, the work of a comprehensive and disposing mind, or even the provisions of a vulgar prudence. Their purpose, every where, seems to have been to evade and slip aside from difficulty." " They get nothing by it." " The difficulties which they rather had eluded than escaped, meet them again in their own course ; they multiply and thicken on them ; they are involved through a labyrinth of confused detail, in an industry without limit, and without direction ; and, in conclusion, the whole of their work becomes feeble, vicious, and insecure."

Yet, before I proceed further, I would here carefully guard myself from being supposed to direct my observations against the men, or even the party which compose the present Ministry, as men, and as a party. I have no such disposition, and no such object. My business is with the country, and not with men or parties ; and I feel assured, that I need take no pains to persuade my readers to agree with me, that the

question before us is too serious and overwhelming to be dealt with according to such views and arguments. Neither do I charge them in what follows, as I have heard others do by insinuation, with a wilful partiality in the arrangements of the scheme. I reject the supposition, because I cannot believe that a set of men, with the characters of English Gentlemen, and holding the station of English Senators of the nineteenth century, would descend to such misconduct. Indeed, if I were disposed to admit it, the cases where there might be most suspicion, would be instances of too clumsy knavery, and too easy of detection to be hazarded by men of ordinary intelligence. But, although I charge them not with corruption, I do arraign them of unnecessary, and therefore unjustifiable haste and carelessness. Whoever be the men, if I cannot call upon them for party opinions, at least, I can demand diligence and discretion. But it is of far more consequence that the country should demand it; and it is to the country that I call, if I give proofs, as I think I can, of this accusation, to declare, that it will interpose to check their perilous precipitation; and that *it* at least will take some time to enquire and to reflect, before it ventures upon this irretrievable, though doubtful step.

To wise, and practical, and prudent States-

men, charged with the execution of a task like this, there were two obvious methods of proceeding open ; the first was, to fix the *principles* by which their plan was to be regulated ; and having done so, and made these known, to leave their application for the result of subsequent deliberation and assistance.

The other was, (and perhaps it would have been the best,) to obtain previously, by every exertion, and from all quarters, the knowledge and counsel which might contribute to aid in the formation of the scheme, to appropriate to these purposes the time which might be really requisite for their attainment, and to propose it then, and not sooner, when they had used all the means within their power, to arrange and to mature its parts. But these methods required some delay : they were too dilatory, too languid, for the ardent energies of the Reforming Cabinet. Neither was their choice. Something to attract the clamour of the country was urgently required ; and the prodigy must needs start from the heads of its inventors, if possible, full armed and of perfect growth, but, most assuredly, without their having gone through that previous process, for securing within themselves the divine and wonder-working Counsel, from whence alone they could have any right to hope for so miraculous a birth.

The course, then, which they have chosen to adopt, is one which combines the evils of both the above-mentioned, without any of their advantages. Within three,—or if we accept their own assurances—within one or two short moons, they fix upon, and finally dispatch this question of awful moment, and irrevocable risk ; a period, scarcely more than sufficient for the deliberate determination of the principles upon which their proposals should be founded, yet, by them, deemed not too short, for the entire application of them in detail ; and we have here the notable result, in a Bill which is presented to the country as complete, and which we are bound so to consider, not only by its own form and history, but their own ready declaration ; one which shall need little, and suffer less, of alteration from alien hands ; “ a burnished and tinsel article,” to be sure, “ of modern manufacture,” but still the finished and entire production of John Russell and Company, Bill-makers, and Schedule-mongers to His Majesty.

Why, then, if this be so, and if this is the whole form of the measure, (some trifling changes in names, and its machinery, excepted,) which it is the intention of Ministers should be carried into actual operation, I say, it is for the people, an imperative and—if they would be true to their own best and dearest

interests an instant duty, to inspect and scrutinize its every part ; not perhaps for the value of all the blunders and absurdities which may be detected in themselves, but, at least, to determine whether it has been brought to such a state, as fits it to be proposed for the solemn and final sanction of a great nation, proceeding to an alteration of a large portion of its ancient usages and institutions. I should take it for granted, that most men must feel the necessity of a confidence in those, who are entrusted with the execution of a change like this ; and if, upon such an investigation, it should be found, that the whole plan is replete with evidence, of what must be taken, either as wanton haste or thoughtless ignorance, I feel that I should be justified, in calling upon that nation to withdraw all confidence from such men ;—not as Ministers generally, for with that I have here no concern ;—but as the conductors of this vital operation ;—to interpose its own good sense, as a check to the progress of their rash attempt, that it may, at least itself, obtain some interval for reflection ;—and even to pronounce its surprise and indignation ; (for I will avow, that such an emotion arises in my mind,) at the reckless precipitation, and unexampled negligence of the slovenly performance, which they have ventured to ask it to confirm.

But if these offences are, indeed, justly

chargeable upon its authors, it must be admitted that they are in no wise caused, and therefore cannot be excused by the intricacy and the nicety of their scheme. It is one which requires,—luckily, as it should appear,—no very eminent conjurors for its contrivance. It is one, which might have been full as well devised by any two or three lads drawn from any counting house, with some practice in addition and subtraction, and a very moderate acquaintance with the institutions of the country ; and, I question much, whether it would not have been more accurately done by functionaries of that description, than by the elevated and speculative personages to whom, or to some of whom, it has been committed. For what is it that they do ? They first of all take the list of existing boroughs, and lay down two or three rules, like gentlemen, without giving themselves the vulgar trouble of enquiring much into their foundation. They then take the counties, and lay down one more after the same manner. Having achieved thus much, they next proceed (I know not exactly by what method, whether they may have chosen the very expeditious and decisive one, in common use, and so *tossed up* ; I think it not improbable ; I am sure they might as well,) to fix the points at which the rules should be applied, and then, having thus

completed the great frame-work of their plan, they set themselves down with the list of places on one hand, and the population returns of ten years past upon the other, and actually apply them, according to the indisputable authority of the Parish Overseers of that period. And the consummation of the whole is this: that whereas the two main grievances for which they profess to find a cure, are, first, the existence of rotten and close Boroughs; and, secondly, the influence of Aristocratic Landlords; they leave, after all, many not less rotten, and create more closer than those which they remove; and if we are to believe their only promise of a security, for the present connexion between the different orders of the State, establish not here or there, but universally, that very power, by the clamour against which they were originally driven to the undertaking.

But let us now look at the plan; when, after all this guarded and cautious process of preliminaries, it is presented to the Legislature of the United Kingdom for enactment.

It is not long since, that the Secretary for Ireland, on the introduction of that limb of Reform which is to be conferred on the sister island, congratulated himself upon the distinction by which it was preserved from all contamination of disfranchisement. He had the

concurrence of all reasonable men with him in his exultation, and was right. But how stands the case with this? and what the contrast? Here we find no tender solicitude to spare, where it is not necessary to destroy; no anxious endeavour to adjust the measure of a harsh expedient by the demands of the occasion;—no diffident forbearance to disturb those usages and prejudices which, in the language of Sir Robert Peel, are effectual, above all other means, “to fortify the feeble contrivances of human wisdom.” The front of it is signalized with disfranchisement; it bears it upon its very forehead; the first clause, and the first schedule, announce it in its harshest and most odious form; and it stands inscribed, even on the threshold, to face one at the first approach, like that awful sentence, (nay, the very language is almost prophetic,

“Per me si va nelle città dolenti,”)

by which Dante has marked the terrors of his infernal gateway.

Here, then, are we not bound to tread softly, and be careful? The question of the right and power of Parliament, I will not discuss; my own opinion is, that it will scarce admit an argument; but be its right and its power, how unlimited soever, it is not less its bounden and unalienable duty, to examine and secure,

with the most jealous caution, the strictness and impartiality of an operation, which goes to confiscate undisputed privilege, with no stronger reason than assumed expediency.

Thus, then, we will proceed to inspect the parts of the enactment, admitting, for the present, and for the convenience of discussion, that, which I by no means intend thereby to admit in fact, namely, the soundness of the rule of former-population, which the architects of this scheme have taken for their guidance. And first comes Schedule A, which contains that list of places from whence it is proposed thus peremptorily to withdraw the whole of their ancient right of separate representation.

The first name which I shall notice, is Beeralston; and I profess myself unable to discover how it appears here. It must be recollected, that this Schedule is supposed to contain the names of those places only, the amount of whose population was, by the census of 1821, of an amount below 2,000 souls. Now, in the Population Abstracts, we look in vain for any entry under this designation; but we find the parish of Beer-Ferris, and are informed, in a note below, that “this parish includes the Borough of Beeralston.” I should have given the Reformers credit, under these circumstances, for having, in this instance, at

least, taken pains to ascertain the real facts of the case, and to distinguish between the limits of the Borough and the Parish. But they have assured us otherwise. To remove all doubt upon this head, and for the instruction of Parliament, there have been laid upon the table of the House of Commons, *by themselves, at their own motion*, certain returns, professing to be those by which this plan has been arranged; and it is remarkable, that, in each of these, the name of Beeralston is to be found, and, annexed to it, the only number which can be assigned to it by the Population Returns, namely, 2195; the amount given for the Parish of Beer-Ferris. Now, if the figures in these Returns are really those by which they were guided, this place is the object of gross injustice; or, if not, what becomes of their Returns? are they not false and worthless? and is it not a mockery, and an insult to Parliament, to present them with any such pretence?

The town of Buckingham* comes next; a

* It seems, that the cases of Buckingham, Okehampton, and Reigate, (together with those of Aldborough and Malmesbury, which depend on different circumstances,) have, at length, carried conviction to the minds of His Majesty's Ministers; and the victims are reprieved. But on no other grounds, be it observed, than were previously before them.

county town, of ancient note, and, therefore, having some claims to consideration, beyond the mere number of its inhabitants. They appear to have taken the population of this town at 1,495. The numbers placed opposite the name, with the description of “*Borough and Parish*,” as we find upon reference to the Population Abstract. But then, immediately below it, and even classed together with it, under the general term of “*Buckingham Borough*,” there stand five other divisions; and a note, at the same time, informs us, that the whole parish contains 3,465; namely, the total of those six sums; and, evidently, the fair amount of the *Borough and Parish* of Buckingham, by the Population Returns; exceeding three-fourths of those which have been reserved for the class above.

In the same way we have the Borough and Parish of Okehampton entered at.. 1,907, the number apparently assumed for the Bill. It happens, however, that a portion of the Parish extends into another hundred, and is, therefore, entered separately; but if the Borough and Parish be really taken, it must clearly be included under that denomination, and gives the true sum at 2,023.

Next we find the town of Reigate; and

the number is taken opposite the designation
Borough, at 1,328.

Immediately beneath it, however, and, evidently, as a mere suburb, is entered the *Foreign*, at 1,633, which completes the parish, and raises the real population of the place to 2,961.

Yet, how is a suburb of this description, and this very name, treated elsewhere, when their business is to confer, instead of to deprive? and what is the difference between their proceeding, when they are about to create rights of their own free grace, and when they are dealing with those which have been enjoyed for centuries of prescription? As we advance further, we shall find Kidderminster, to which it is proposed to give a single representation, termed indeed in the schedule “Town,”—one among various instances of vagueness and irregularity, but evidently taken by the separate returns as the *Parish*; including what is called, in the Population Abstracts, “the Suburb, called the Foreign;” although, that suburb lies not even in the same hundred of its county; and in the same list, the town of Walsall, actually designated in the schedule as the “Borough and Foreign,” although, the word “Parish” stands against the name of Walsall in the

Abstracts, and the Foreign constitutes a distinct township.

The Borough of Saltash appears within a few names from this last. It is entered indeed in the Abstract separately, as the Borough, at 1,548; but, at the same time, as the only sub-division of the parish of St. Stephen's-by-Saltash, of which the whole stands at .. 2,873; a parish, bearing almost the same name, and being almost the same place in point of actual locality. How far it is fair, in this case, to condemn the franchise by such nice distinction, we shall be better able to judge when we have examined further, and know more of the analogy of their proceedings in other quarters.

To pass, therefore, to the second list,—of places, which, by default of the full amount of 4,000 souls, are to be amerced of but half their importance in the State. In this catalogue, the entries, according to the Population Abstracts, and the separate returns, compared together, may be classed as follows, according to their different designations:—

Borough and Parish	19
Borough	5
Borough and Chapelry	1
Borough and Town	2

Borough and Township	1
Parish	7
Two Parishes	1
Three Parishes	7
Four Parishes	3
Parishes and Liberty	1
Parish and Tythings	1
Cinque Port and Two Parishes	1

Here then we have, at once, a tolerable exhibition of the anomalies and uncertainty of the materials with which we are compelled to work. But it will be said, that these anomalies exist in fact; and that, therefore, they may be still correct, according to the local circumstances and divisions of the country. We must, therefore, take some of those few cases in which we are provided with the means of further investigation, and see how far that may be the case, and what may be their actual bearing upon the individual examples. We have lately noticed that of Saltash. Of the same description are the following:—

Westbury*, taken at	2,117
Cockermouth	3,790
Clitheroe	3,213

* In the *real* Bill, which has just emerged from its chrysalis, in a new form, Westbury, also, together with Leominster, Northallerton, Tamworth, Truro, Morpeth, and

Helston	.....	2,671
Leominster	.....	3,651
Lymington	.....	3,164
Wycombe	.....	2,864
Morpeth	.....	3,415
North Allerton	.....	2,626
Tamworth	.....	1,636

Now, what are the real circumstances of each?

Westbury happens to be entered distinctly as the Borough, but is classed merely as a sub-division of its own parish, containing, in all 6,846.

Cockermouth, in the same way, a mere portion of the Parish of Brigham, which has 6,037.

Clitheroe, again ; of that of Whalley, with 84,198 ; a greater population than that proposed for a double representation in Leeds, Greenwich, Sheffield, or Sunderland.

Helston, classed within the parish of Wendron, containing 6,864.

Leominster, taken with the numbers affixed to the designation of “ Borough and Parish,” yet the Parish containing 4,646.

Lymington, taken as the “ Borough *and*

Wycombe, resumes its former buoyancy. The reasons remain the same.

“ Return Alpheüs, the dread voice is past

“ That shrunk thy streams.”

old Town," yet being altogether merely a parochial chapelry, as we are informed by a note, within the Parish of Boldre, containing 5,344.

Wycombe, being actually entered as "*Borough and Parish*," though with separate numbers; the whole parish, so designated, containing 5,599.

Morpeth, the "*Borough*" classed as a subdivision of its own parish, containing .. 4,292.

Northallerton, taken as the *Borough and Township*, yet forming only part of its own parish, with 4,431.

And Tamworth, taken at the amount of what is termed the "*Borough and Parish*," in two different hundreds; yet with the entire omission of the portion included in a third, and of all the remainder of the parish, which contains, altogether 7,285; although, one of the divisions, included in that remainder, we are again informed, by a note in the Abstract, actually forms part of the streets of the town itself.

Two more instances, in this list, I must still notice, as examples not less remarkable than the above, but which do not depend upon precisely the same circumstances. The first is Guildford, and the second Truro. The entry of Guildford, in the Abstract, takes

the Borough separately, at 3,161;
yet part of one of its own parishes is omitted,
and the whole of another, termed Stoke-next-
Guildford; which is known, in fact, to be a
portion of the town, and which contain, alto-
gether, the sum of 4,770.
And Truro Borough is taken at . . . 2,712;
while a note, upon the same page, remarks,
that the *town* is, in fact, three times as po-
pulous, or contains 8,136.

The reply to any remark upon the inconsis-
tencies of such cases, will be, of course, that it
was not intended to take the parish, or any
other division, as the acknowledged limit, by
the extent of which the right of franchise should
be adjudged; but, on the contrary, to decide
by that to which the privilege has actually
attached. The rule may be rational enough;
and I know not that any one would have reason
to complain of its universal and impartial appli-
cation. But how are the true facts with the
arrangement, as it stands before the country?
Let us recollect what is the precise nature of
these examples. They are all places in which,
according to certain descriptions assigned to
them in the Population Abstract, of various
import, though seeming to approach to the
definition of the true line of chartered limit,
the numbers assumed as the test of quali-

fication, fall within one rule; while, by the addition of some contiguous appendage, including, or included, they would be at once brought within another. In the instances which have been stated, this addition is refused, by the most rigorous observance of antiquated sub-divisions; but when we advance further, and arrive at the distribution of new franchise, we find this strict practice totally disregarded and forgotten, in order to qualify those who are called in to appropriate these sequestered rights. In one place, there are two or three parishes thrown together to make up a place for double representation; in another, two towns, at no less than eight miles distance, united, to create a title for one Member; and we meet, at each step, with parishes, containing five, fifteen, or five and twenty townships, chapelries, and other sub-divisions, classed according to the simple total of their aggregate importance. Why, with such inconsistency of selection, such disregard of equity, which of these sentenced Boroughs will not be justified if it complain, and if it protest against the inequality of practice, which gives to an arbitrary rule all force to create, yet denies it all efficacy to save?

But, most certainly, they will be still less content, when they inspect the very catalogue

in which they are themselves disposed, and find such examples as the following ;—

Wilton, taken as a Borough and Parish, at but 2058.

And East Grinstead, by the same denomination at 3153.

The former including, as a note informs us, several other sub-divisions, and containing “ many who were occupied in the woollen manufactory ; yet, that branch of trade not being prosperous, are now employed in Lord Pembroke’s Park, and in making roads, and other alterations about the town,” or, in other words, supported by charity, and the Poor-rates ; and the latter forming, not only a parish, but a hundred, in itself, and bearing with it, in one of the separate returns, this information, that “ the Borough is believed to contain about one-third of the parish ;” or, in fact, no more than 1,051 ; and in the more fortunate rank immediately above them,

Christchurch, assumed at the saving number of 4644 ; by the assistance of eight tithings returned distinctly in 1811, and

Horsham, at 4575 ; but only by the united sum of three separate

parts, whereof one is denominated the Borough, and which were, likewise, distinguished in that former census.

Not to mention various others of a like description, or those which are taken in these Schedules, by the parish, or some such name, yet which are actually stated in the abovementioned return, to exceed, in different degrees, the real limits of the Borough.

What, then, is the result of this investigation? Must not our conclusion in truth be this, that how good and useful soever those returns may be for other purposes, they are confused and inaccurate for this, and monstrously unfit to depend upon, when we are disposing for ever of the privileges and rights of ages? And could it well be otherwise? We have to deal with various and complicated divisions upon which the enjoyment of those rights depends; and yet we are called upon to trust entirely to the answers of a number of parish officers, to a general question upon population, and delivered in a manner which may be somewhat appreciated by the observations prefixed to the abstract; but, perhaps, still more by the inspection of another return, which has been already cited, and wherein are statements, shewing, that, in no fewer than forty-five cases, the actual limits are less than are given in that ab-

stract,—in eight larger, and in nine different, without specification; while, in 127 others, there is no remark made, although some are manifestly, (and how many more it would be difficult to say,) equally inaccurate; and, after all, is this entire dependence unavoidable? It may be convenient, indeed, but I know not why means taken for enquiry of the same kind in one quarter, may not also be extended to another; and they appear, in some operations, to have thought it worth while to provide for the due settlement of such questions, by the appointment of a Committee in the Bill for that specific purpose, whose employment must, for aught I see, be much of this very nature.

During the course of these observations, however, it must be recollected, that one point has been admitted, without dispute, upon which rests the whole of our subject matter, namely, the assumption that population constitutes the just rule whereby the representative franchise should be distributed. Now is this, after all, the truth? For my own part, were the documents and inferences upon which we have been employed, all correct, I should still, on this ground, be disposed to question their present use. It would seem, that even the contrivers of the scheme themselves, had some misgivings upon the subject, and a glimpse of

better light, for having determined the quarters wherein they would vest the franchise, by the bare test of population, they think it necessary to restrict its exercise by the qualifications of property. But they do more; for, finding that this restriction leaves them in divers instances perplexed, by a deficiency, on the other hand, in the numbers which they consider necessary, for the proper measure of the constituent bodies, they betake themselves to an ingenious and somewhat singular expedient. They propose the appointment of a Committee from the Privy Council, to remedy the evil, with powers, not directed to the annexation of additional numbers, *by the same rule of population*, but left free to the discretionary choice of “any parishes or townships adjoining, or outlying portions,” *as they shall deem convenient for the purposes of election*.

Why, this very Committee would find itself compelled, in the execution of its duty, to contradict at once the fitness of the principle, upon which its masters had founded all their operations; and they would be doomed, upon the first occasion, to behold this Frankenstein of their own creation, break from their controul, and disown the example, while it threw aside the most cherished precepts, of its creators. For how must it proceed? Let us imagine it

engaged upon some deficient Borough : let us suppose it casting its eye over the neighbourhood for a supply of becoming voters. Would it, if it did its duty with discretion, fix upon some swarming suburb of crowded hovels ; or would it not rather apply itself to some more inviting appendage, of well built and well kept houses, if it were to be found, not wanting indeed in its proportion of inhabitants, but combining in their habitations the evidence of property, and the presumption of comparative intelligence. If we can imagine it, thus providing, for instance, for the wants of London, would they seek the remedy in the purlieus of Shadwell, and of Wapping ; or in the decent streets and substantial dwellings of Islington and Pentonville ? We may pursue the question further, and we shall see how the contents of these very documents bear upon the difficulty. Take a few names, the most obvious that may occur, and it will be found, for instance, that in Liverpool the houses are 19,007, and the families inhabiting them 25,309, or nearly one third more,

	Houses.	Families.	
Manchester	21,156	28,318	about 1-third more
Canterbury,	2,408	2,890	do. 1-sixth do.
Worcester,	3,037	3,786	above 1-fourth do.
Newcastle on Tyne,	4,031	8,297	more than double
Norwich,	10,624	12,478	above 1-fifth more
Reading,	2,446	2,806	do. 1-sixth do.

And, surely, it is not unreasonable to say, that some inference may be drawn from these proportions as to the condition of the population; as that in Liverpool and Newcastle, the amount is swelled by classes, whose wandering profession gives them few connexions and small stakes on shore; in Canterbury and Reading, it is mainly composed of those whose circumstances are directly the reverse; and so of all the rest. If I am not deceived, the rule adopted in one great precedent, at least, the Irish Union, had reference to these considerations; although I have it not in my power to say, precisely, in what it may have consisted. But I will ask my readers to cast their eyes over the following tables, and they will see how the numbers, arranged with what means of adaptation we have to these parts of the question, affect the order of the present plan.

SCHEDULE A.

Boroughs.	Houses.
1. Wareham	417

SCHEDULE B.

Boroughs.	Houses.
1. Liskeard	414
2. Ashburton	411
3. Dorchester	405
4. Wilton	405
5. Wallingford	386

2. Wooton Bassett..	379	6. Beeralston	370
		7. Totness	356
3. Aldeburgh	268		
4. Bedwin	349		
5. Bishop's Castle ..	344		
6. Brackley	354		
7. Buckingham	287		
8. Corfe Castle	283		
9. Eye	340		
10. Fowey	317		
11. Malmesbury	275		
12. Milborne	298		
13. Minehead	265		
14. Newton (Lanc.)..	275		
15. Okehampton	315		
16. Petersfield	262		
17. St. Mawes	316		
18. St. Michael	348		
19. Wendover	281		
20. Whitchurch	268		
21. Woodstock	258		
22. Heytesbury	253	8. Launceston	253

SCHEDULE A.

Boroughs.	Houses rated at £10., and upwards.
1. Woodstock	90
2. Reigate	78

SCHEDULE B.

Boroughs.	Houses rated at £10., and upwards.
1. Hythe	77
2. Thetford	77

3. Buckingham	75	3. Marlow	75
4. Malmesbury	75	4. Shaftesbury	75
		5. Thirsk	75
		6. Droitwich	69
5. Appleby	65		
6. Midhurst	65	7. Clitheroe	60
		8. Ashburton	54
7. Petersfield	54		
8. Wareham	53		
9. Fowey	46		
10. Hedon	44	9. E. Grinstead	42
11. Okehampton	42		
12. Bishop's Castle ..	38		
13. Lostwithiel	37		
14. Minehead	36		
15. Plympton	39		
16. Seaford	36		
17. Wootton Bassett ..	36		
18. Saltash	34	10. Wilton	34
19. Callington	32		
20. Aldeburgh	31		
21. Eye	29		
22. Stockbridge	31		
		11. St. Ives	26
23. Brackley	25	12. Amersham	25
24. Boroughbridge....	18		
25. Haslemere	16		
26. Heytesbury	21		
27. E. Looe	20		
28. Newton (Lanc.) ..	19		
29. Orford	20		
30. Romney	24		
31. Steyning	18		
32. Whitchurch	21		

33. Camelford	14	13. Westbury	14
34. Wendover	14		
35. Yarmouth(I.of Wight)	14		
36. Winchelsea	13	14. St. Germain's	13
37. Corfe Castle	11		
38. Hindon	11		
39. Ilchester	11		
40. Milborne	11		
41. Queenborough ..	11		
42. Tregony	11		
43. St. Mawes	9	15. Downton	9

SCHEDULE B.

UNTOUCHED.

Boroughs.	Houses.
1. Leominster	854
2. Sudbury	843
3. St. Ives	772
4. Cockermouth	766
5. Evesham	746
6. Richmond	748
7. Tamworth	747
8. Grimsby	734

Boroughs.	Houses.
1. Horsham	819
2. Andover	810
3. Barnstaple	805
4. Malton	774
5. Winchester	769
6. Grantham	766
7. St. Albans	744
8 Newport(I.Wight)	716

	9. Tavistock	....	710	
	10. Harwich	.....	699	
9. Honiton	....	697		
	11. Hertford	.....	656	
10. Rye	.....	616		
	12. Dartmouth	.....	607	
11. Amersham	....	494		
12. Bridport	.....	604		
13. Chippenham	....	541		
14. Clitheroe	.....	550		
15. Downton	...	582		
16. Guildford	....	560		
17. Huntingdon	....	538		
18. Lymington	....	543		
19. Maldon	.....	606		
20. Marlow	.....	494		
21. Northallerton	....	567		
22. Penryn	.....	498		
23. Sandwich	....	578		
24. Shaftesbury	....	605		
25. Thetford	....	602		
26. Thirsk	.....	591		
27. Wycombe	....	519		
28. Marlborough	....	488	13 Devizes	.... 488

SCHEDULE B.

UNTOUCHED.

Houses rated at £10., and upwards.			Houses rated at £10., and upwards.		
Boroughs.			Boroughs.		
1. Dorchester	....	231			
			1. Lewes	.....	230
			2. Bridgnorth	....	220

			3. Grantham	228
2. Guildford	213			
3. Totness	213			
			4. Andover	207
			5. Bedford	209
4. Wycombe	206			
			6. Knaresborough ..	203
5. Huntingdon	200			
6. Leominster	195	7. Ripon	195	
7. Truro	190	8. Stafford	190	
8. Lymington	189			
9. Honiton	189			
		9. Pontefract	184	
10. Chippenham	180			
11. Evesham	178			
12. Richmond	175			
		10. Wells	173	
		11. Harwich	170	
		12. Horsham	165	
13. Morpeth	162			
		13. Rochester	156	
14. Bridport	146	14. Malton	146	
15. Bodmin	139			
16. Lyme	135			
17. Maldon	133			
18. Marlborough	140			
19. Sandwich	125			
20. Tamworth	137			
21. Wallingford	124	15. Calne	124	
22. Arundel	120			
23. Cocker-mouth ...	101			
24. Grimsby	94			
25. Helston	112			
26. Launceston . . .	93			

27. Liskeard	95	
28. Northallerton ..	107	
29. Penryn	112	
30. Rye	95	
31. Sudbury	108	
		16. Christchurch 80
32. Ashburton	54	
33. Clitheroe	60	
34. Droitwich	69	
35. Grinstead	42	
36. Hythe	77	
37. Marlow	75	
38. Shaftesbury ..	75	
39. Thetford	77	
40. Thirsk	75	
		17 Wenlock
		36

The result is striking, and needs no explanation. For my own part, I cannot doubt, that, in many cases, it points out the true rank of places, although with a smaller population, yet having more wealth, and a better distribution of it in their proportion; and when I find among the names, in Schedule A., condemned

	Popu- lation.	£10. Rates, and upwards.
Buckingham, with the numbers..	1495	73
Woodstock	1455	90
Reigate	1328	78
Wareham	1931	53

And saved, in Schedule B.

St. Germain's	.....	2404	13
Westbury	.....	2117	14
Amersham	.....	2612	25
Downton	.....	3114	9

In Schedule B. again,

Dorchester	.....	2743	231
Totness	.....	3128	213
Guildford	.....	3161	213
Wycombe	.....	2864	206
Huntingdon	.....	2806	200

Condemned, and

Christchurch	.....	4644	80
Wenlock	.....	17265	36
Calne	.....	4549	124
Malton	.....	4005	146
Rochester,	.....	9309	156

untouched; I am tempted to believe, that the partial principle by which they have been disposed of, has in it something which is essentially defective.

After these provisions of the Bill then, out of the abundance of the liberated franchises which they have supplied, and which seem, from the wish to throw a large number entirely away, to have produced even what the French call an *embarras de richesses*, it is proposed to assign a proportion to that which has always been considered the soundest and

steadiest part of the constituent system,—the county representation; and for this purpose, are selected by the same method of the Population Returns alone, what are designated as the twenty-seven largest counties, to be divided into convenient parts by the same omniscient Privy Council. But even upon this simple principle, let it be observed, how the selection has been executed. We were told, that, from the operation of the Bill, one of the advantages to be gained, was, that the represented towns would be withdrawn from the constituent numbers of the counties. As far as the smaller freeholders are concerned, I do not see how this is the case; but we are told so,—and it follows, that if this promise be not a mere mockery, the population of the represented towns should be subtracted from that of their respective counties, in establishing the scale of their precedency. But this would have been too troublesome a calculation; and there is none of it. Yet, it is but bare justice that it should be made; for if the additional representation of the counties is to be fixed by population, it must be, in all fairness, by that portion of the population only, which has an interest in such county representation; and not, that is to say, by the portions which have a direct representation

of their own. I have, therefore, adopted this process, as with the Boroughs; first, by the simple rule of enumerated inhabitants; and, secondly, by that of the rated habitations of £10. and upwards. The result is, that, excluding the County of Middlesex, and the Ridings of Yorkshire, out of twenty-seven counties, selected in the Bill, there are, by the former, four of those which have been totally omitted, having a prior right to Cumberland; no less than six to Nottingham; and standing thus in actual numbers:—

SELECTED.		OMITTED.*	
Counties.	Population.	Counties.	Population.
		Bucks	121,660
		Herts	120,977
		Dorset	119,830
		Oxford	118,674
Cumberland ..	115,387		
		Cambridge	107,767
		Berks	106,182
Notts.	104,349		

* Here they now propose, on their second thoughts, to “split the difference,” (as in the question respecting the whole numbers of the House, where they now annihilate only thirty-one seats, instead of sixty-two,) by taking these counties, together with Herefordshire, and giving to them a *triple* franchise, unknown to the Constitution in

While, according to the latter, as appears by the following list, the result is still more striking.

EXCLUDED.		SELECTED.	
Counties.	Houses rated at £10., and upwards.	Counties.	Houses rated at £10., and upwards.
Hertford	..... 2931		
		Worcester	..... 2896
		Chester	... .. 2639
		Leicester	..... 2502
		Lincoln	..... 2484

any other case. The change matters nothing to the argument, since there is still a *selection* for *unequal* favour. But will it matter nothing to the practical working of the system? In small bodies, such as those few towns which return but one Member each, the principle is of no moment, which would provide for the equal representation of majorities and large minorities, by a double franchise. But, in more numerous collections of men, such as counties, and great towns, it is a principle of a most wise and salutary operation; not prevailing against public opinion, where it declares itself strongly on one side, but where parties are nearly balanced, acting constantly by the gentle and peaceful means of compromise and conciliation. It needs but one moment's reflection, to perceive that this new whim is no more than a provision for the propagation of perpetual contests. But, truly, these schoolboy lawgivers seem to think that they have no graver business to perform, than just to put a few figures together, according to their fancy.

	Sussex	2354
	Wilts	2285
	Durham	2191
	Norfolk	2186
	Cornwall	2072
Berks	2017	
	Salop	1866
Dorset	1676	
	Notts	1658
	Derby	1486
Bucks	1449	
Oxford	1440	
Monmouth	1395	
	Northampton ...	1301
	Cumberland	1244

So that the County of Hertford stands above 14 of those which have been selected; Berkshire, above five; Dorsetshire, above four; and there still remain two below the Shires of Buckingham, of Oxford, and of Monmouth. Nor is the difference entirely confined to the comparative claims of the individual Counties, for it will be observed, that independently of the variation in the interests, with which each may be connected, it raises a more considerable proportion of the wealth of the southern and midland districts of the kingdom, against the overwhelming amount, but inferior condition of the multitudes, supplied by the concentrated trade and manufactures of the North.

I have omitted, in these calculations, the

names of Middlesex, and of the three Yorkshire Ridings; but if I were asked the reason, I should be somewhat perplexed to give a better, than that I found it so in the subject of my examination. That which would be alleged, I apprehend, for the neglect of Middlesex, is that it is small in its extent, but a Metropolitan County, and, therefore, too much identified with that point of copious representation, to be considered distinctly from the connection to which it owes its whole importance. The reasoning may be good; but if so, what becomes of the case of Surrey, a County, scarcely less Metropolitan, and certainly owing its station to the same circumstance; and I cannot quite appreciate the delicate discrimination, which permits Surrey to exalt itself upon the qualifications of Bermondsey, and Clapham, above the population of seventeen of the chosen Counties, while it rejects the claim of Middlesex to the first place in the scale, upon those of Brentford, of Chelsea, and of Hackney. But the treatment of the three Yorkshire Ridings is still more singular, and less intelligible; the West Riding would be placed by a population of 356,027 souls, above all, save Lancashire and Middlesex: yet it is left with but two Members, while Nottinghamshire, with less than one-third of the sum, is to be provided with

four. The North Riding, although it ranks, by the same rule, above nine of those named in the Schedule, and the East, even above two, are both in like manner forgotten: but the most curious part of the whole matter is, that the Ainsty, as it is termed, or, in other words, the County of the City of York, hitherto classed with the population of the latter, which amounts only to 123,119, is to be subtracted from that quarter, and thrown into the North, which contains already no less than 162,138, without any such addition.

I am aware, that in all that part of the foregoing observations, which proceed upon the qualification of a rated rent, I am open, in the first place, to the argument, that it is, after all, a fallacious test of property, inasmuch as the very situation of such property, in various neighbourhoods, with other extraneous circumstances, may fix its relative values, independently of the real comparative worth of the property itself. But the truth is, that the objection is not sound beyond a certain point; for whatever may be the causes which decide that value, the very ability to occupy property at a given rate, is an evidence of corresponding means, and therefore, if the rate is assumed at a proper point—of sufficient wealth; but I feel that I am also liable to a more serious objection, in

the obvious imperfection of the documents upon which I have relied. To this, I can only answer, that they are none of mine. I am compelled to use such as are attainable by ordinary means.

It is true, that those returns, which have been made out by local functionaries, must vary greatly, according to the assessment of the local rates from whence they are made up, which is in some cases fixed upon one half, in others, upon two thirds, and in others again, upon four-fifths, or other quotients, of the actual rent; and that, even in those which have the authority of the Tax Office, it is probable, that the numbers would, in the event of the proposed change, be generally raised, either by a collusive agreement between the landlord and the tenant, or by a sacrifice upon the part of the latter. Yet be the weight of these difficulties what it may with others, to these prurient Reformers, at least, they appear to have given no material embarrassment, for they no sooner appropriate the principle, than they seem to think that they cannot have too much of it; and instead of endeavouring so to moderate its use, as to gather something from an experience of its effects, before all is committed to the hazard of its failure, they apply it with a zeal, so needless and indiscriminate, as (excluding Wales,

and the Boroughs of which the franchise is now vested in the hundreds,) still to leave the whole of the Schedule B., together with thirty-five other places, with less than the numbers upon which they have fixed as the proper measure for a constituent body, whereof thirty-eight want half; twenty-one, two-thirds; and eight, five-sixths;—and as almost to induce one to suspect, for lack of some better explanation, that the whole must be, after all, only a sly trick of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's, to turn an honest penny by the Assessed Taxes, in the Budgets of the ensuing years.

In spite, however, of the prevailing confusion to which our attention has been hitherto directed, they are here and there, upon occasions,—but always, be it observed, where it costs no trouble beyond the caprice itself,—subject to attacks of fastidious, I had almost said morbid, fondness for regularity, which exhibit them and their works in the most curious aspect. A very remarkable instance of this affection is to be found in a concise Schedule, which enumerates certain small districts, entitled counties of cities and towns, which are scattered in small numbers through the kingdom. They are divisions few in number, and easy of recognition, often containing a mere extension of the population of the principal place, and from which it has

not even been alleged that any evil or inconvenience has arisen. It would be difficult to assign any good reason for disturbing them, except that they are ancient and not modern anomalies; but, what Burke has called the “quadrimonious activity” of these gentlemen cannot now brook the continuance of such flaws in the uniformity of their system, and these limits are consequently abolished, for the purposes of election; at the same time that the before mentioned Committee of the Privy Council is sent to recruit their number under other names, and in other quarters, in their circuit of annexation.

We will pass over such blunders as the provision that the freeholders of the County of Bristol, for example, shall vote for that of Somerset, when above six-sevenths of the population of the place belong to the Shire of Gloucester;* but there is one point deserving of remark, to which I am here led by the suggestions of analogy. Of much the same character as these partial districts, are those which have been created by the extension of suffrage, in some cases, from a borough to its hundred. They are,

* This their intense industry, since they produced their first Bill, for the sanction of Parliament, seems to have enabled them to discover.

Aylesbury, with a population of	16,671
Cricklade	11,661
East Retford	34,025
Shoreham	26,940

Under cover of these numbers, they are fortunate enough to escape the withering influence of this unsparing Bill. But now mark what happens. There is a clause enacted to establish universally the favourite ten pounds franchise; and provided with two exceptions, in favour, first, of all existing “corporate rights;” and, secondly, of “rights to vote by reason of owning or occupying any tenement,” or, in other words, of burgage tenure; and this is all. Whatever doubts there may exist in other respects, it seems clear from the letter of this clause, as well as from the spirit of the system, that the freeholders of these incorporated districts should be again confined to their single and original county vote. Thus, according to the inevitable doom, the detected borough must, at length, be stripped of their borrowed population; and will stand as follows, after the mortifying process:—

Aylesbury	4,400
Cricklade	1,506
East Retford	2,465
Shoreham	1,047

Aylesbury, indeed, just escapes further muti-

lation; but East Retford must submit to the loss of half its franchise, according to the inexorable law of condemnation; while Cricklade and Shoreham must both forfeit the whole of their representative existence. Yet, suppose they should be spared with Aylesbury, their muster of the £10. rents would stand thus :

Aylesbury	.....	120
Cricklade	.....	94
East Retford	.....	124
Shoreham	.....	26

And that disrespectful and unruly Committee would again step in, to dishonour and undo the arrangements of its makers; and in order to fill up the indispensable complement of electors, in defiance of all filial decency, recal those very multitudes which they had just thought fit, in the fulness of their wisdom, to dismiss.*

But enough of this. We will now turn to that part of the projected measure, which I will do them the justice to believe, was to them, as it would have been to every one else, a more welcome and agreeable department of their duty; and to which, indeed, they seem to have set

* Here, again, they have at last found out their own disgraceful absurdity; and they seem to think, that the best way of getting out of the scrape, is to be before-hand with the Privy Council.

themselves with so great avidity, as to have impaired their powers not only of calculation, but even of perception. In a short clause, with two Schedules “to match,” is comprised the enactment, conferring upon certain places, for the first time, the enjoyment of the elective franchise. Let us look into the first list,—of towns destined for the full complement of representation. The names of Manchester, Birmingham, and Leeds, commence the catalogue; and in Manchester there is one of those rare and fitful symptoms of special enquiry and discrimination, which this performance occasionally presents.* Every other place within this list has been defined according to the boundary of parishes, one or more; with Manchester it is otherwise, and only a fraction of its own parish is assumed (for reasons good and powerful, no doubt, but not very obvious), by a specification of eight out of twenty-eight townships and chapelries, which compose the total. It cannot be that the excluded divisions are comparatively insignificant, for they contained in 1821 more than 29,000 inhabitants within no very inordinate space; it cannot be that the whole sum

* It is now proposed to give a separate Member to Salford, a mere fraction,—hardly to be called a suburb,—of Manchester town!

would be too enormous for combination, because they would produce not more than 186,942 inhabitants, while, within a short distance, we meet with Halifax*, whose parish presents no less than 185,768; it cannot be that it is wished to leave them in the county, because we are told that one of the promised improvements of the Bill will be to withdraw from such connexions the like masses of town population; neither can it be from apprehension of the extent of such a district, for we shall soon see how far it is exceeded. And, without devoting more time to so hopeless a speculation, we will proceed to a remarkable instance of this latter quality in the case of Halifax. This parish is described by its Historian Watson as being “ from S. E. to N. W. near 20 miles, and from E. to W. about 17;” and by another author as extending 16 miles in length by 5 or 6 in width, (giving an area of at least 80 square miles), and being reputed as the largest in England. The number belonging to the township of Halifax alone is only 12,628; but, for the purposes of the new system, the whole is to be taken together, with no less than

* The fruit is, after all, refused to the *Parish* of Halifax, which was thus tantalized, and is to be halved, and given to the *Township*.

23 subdivisions; and, as we have before observed, a population of 185,768. Now, let it here be recollected how many boroughs have suffered a relentless extinction in a former portion of the Bill, because the benefit of this method of calculation was denied them; that among the rest that of Clitheroe was deprived of half its actual representation, although a part of the parish of Whalley, and containing the towns of Burnley and Colne, with a population of 84,198 inhabitants; while

Leeds, with	.....	83,796
Greenwich, &c. with	.....	58,538
Sheffield, with	.....	65,275
Wolverhampton, &c. with	....	47,578

have been admitted to the whole privilege. And one more, with the appearance of which in this place one cannot but be somewhat puzzled, namely, Sunderland, with the two parishes of Wearmouth, giving 33,911; while the following claims are quietly but entirely unnoticed,* viz.

Bury, Parish	.....	34,581
Rochdale, ditto	.....	47,109
Oldham	.....	52,510;

and the following are posted in the less distin-

* Since admitted, together with Stoke-upon-Trent; Wakefield, (*forgotten*,) and Whitby.

guished rank, for the allotment of but one Member each :

Blackburn, Parish	.....	53,350
Bradford, ditto	..... ..	52,950

And I believe I might add the name of Devonport and its appendages, though this place cannot be correctly ascertained from the Population Abstracts, and was in fact wholly *forgotten* in the original construction of the Bill. If it is possible to conceive that some political reasons might be given for these appearances, such as have been so often used in favour of the three first names upon this list,—that they were the centres of great departments of national industry and enterprise,—the principle of such reasons would be perfectly just ; but even were it applicable to such cases, we are forbidden by all the structure and whole character of this measure to admit it ; and we are bound to adhere to the established criterion of population, by which its harsher parts have been confessedly adjusted. The next Schedule contains those places which are to be put as it were upon the half-pay of the new Representative Establishment:—and we find in it, among a diversity of descriptions, which seem to affect a clumsy imitation of the ancient anomalies in the former catalogues, a name which I shall take first,

because it seems to me the most remarkable, the name of Gateshead;—and of which I am here entirely at a loss to account for the intrusion. For those who are unacquainted with the localities of the place, I would ask attention to the following authorities. Camden speaks thus: “On the Tyne we must take notice of Gateshead, a kind of suburb to Newcastle, to which it was annexed by Edward VI.” And again, “This place and Newcastle seem formerly to have made one town, only divided by the river.” In Brand’s History of Newcastle, we find the account of its annexation, and again its subsequent separation, and of the design to re-annex it in 1646; and the additional fact, that the Crown conferred the Manor of Gateshead on certain Burgesses of Newcastle, who assigned it to the Corporation; and that they repeatedly held their Head Courts there in consequence. It is as a mere appendage to Newcastle, therefore, that its history instructs us to consider it; do its actual circumstances warrant us in a different estimate of its character?—It is separated from Newcastle by the river Tyne alone,—as Bedminster is separated from Bristol; as Weymouth from Melcombe Regis; and as Monk Wearmouth is from Sunderland. Its interests are identical, though subordinate, as the port to a neighbourhood of coal mines;—and yet while

Aston, with Inhabitants	19,189
Is added to Birmingham, with	85,416

To make up	104,605
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Woolwich, with.....	17,008
To Greenwich and Deptford, with	41,530

Making... ..	58,538
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And, by a special provision,

Portsea	38,379
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To Portsmouth	7,269
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Making	45,648
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Chatham and Stroud	16,215
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To Rochester	24,063
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Making	40,278
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And Sculcoates	10,449
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To Hull	28,591
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Making	39,040
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Gateshead, with but	11,767
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Which, if joined to Newcastle.....	35,181
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Would make no larger sum than..	46,948
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and being smaller in the amount of its census than any one other town in the Schedule for

which it was selected,* is raised to the dignity of an independent Borough, and is to speak its separate will in Parliament, through its own appropriate Representative.

But we cannot yet dismiss it; for it is also worth while to give one moment to look at the omissions. There are, as far as they can be made out from the vagueness of some of the definitions of "Town," &c. in the two Schedules, eleven places taken as "the Parish," of which a large proportion are in the North of England. Now we shall understand this subject better, if we just refer to what is said upon it in the preliminary observations, prefixed to the Population Abstracts. We are there informed, that, "on the introduction of the 'Poor Laws,' the inconvenience which was felt in the northern counties from this cause, (the size of the parishes,) will be easily explained, by stating, that thirty or forty square miles is there no unusual area of a parish; and (generally speaking) parishes, in the North, average seven or eight times the area of those in the southern counties. Hence, in the thirteenth year of Charles II. (soon

* Except Kendal, and Kidderminster; which, according to a later return, appear to be taken as the "Towns" respectively, at 8,984, and 10,709. However, *they* are at least independent places.

after his restoration) a law was passed, permitting townships and villages, though not entire parishes, severally, and distinctly, to maintain their own poor; assigning, as a reason for this innovation, ‘ That the inhabitants of Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, Northumberland, the Bishoprick of Durham, Cumberland, and Westmoreland, and many other counties of England and Wales, by reason of the largeness of the parishes within the same, have not, and cannot reap the benefit of the Act of Parliament (43d of Elizabeth) for the relief of the poor.’ Under this law, the *Townships* of the North have become as distinctly limited in practice as if they were separate parishes; and, of course, make separate returns.”

Nevertheless, in these Schedules, we find the parish of Halifax, of which we have already spoken; Blackburn, with an area of about twelve and a half miles in length, with twenty-three subdivisions; Huddersfield, of above seven or eight, comprising seven; and Bradford, of twelve or fourteen, by about eight, with thirteen townships and chapelries; besides several others, which it would be tedious to detail. There are, moreover, towns, such as Whitehaven and Workington, at no

less than eight miles distance; Greenwich, and Deptford, and Woolwich; Wolverhampton, Bilston, and Sedgeley; united to form the required numbers, with separate parishes; and then we find Gateshead, with only 11,767 souls, inserted in a list of eighteen names; whereof, according to our means of enquiry, there appear to be four standing below 12,000, eleven below 20,000, and eighteen below 30,000;* and I ask, whether the following places, namely,

Whalley Parish.....	84,198
Bury ditto	34,581
Rochdale ditto	47,109
Oldham ditto	52,510
Ashton-under-Line ditto	25,967
Stourbridge and Old Swinford, contiguous Parishes.....	11,227
Stroud, Bisley, and Minching-Hampton, within a mile or two of distance	20,361
Bradford, (Wilts,) and Trowbridge, the same	19,776
Whitby Parish	12,331
Keighley and Bingley, in Yorkshire, within two or three miles	16,598
Ormskirk Parish	12,422
Kirkham, Lancashire.....	11,925

* These numbers are corrected by the latest return; where, by the bye, Warrington again is *forgotten*.

Almondbury, Yorkshire, Parish	23,979
And Redruth, in Cornwall, with its own, and the four small adjacent parishes of Camborne, Gwennap, Stithyans, and Illuggan, the centre of a great mining population, and important interests	25,972

with others, which might still prolong the roll, have not, under this canon of population, a ground for protest and remonstrance against the partiality or negligence of the selection, which it would be difficult satisfactorily to answer. I will not dwell upon the ignorant error of describing Stockport, as in Lancashire, nor upon the absurdity of separating South Shields from North Shields and Tynemouth, like Gateshead from Newcastle, presenting, together, not more than a population of 41,323; while Blackburn, with 53,350; and Bradford, with 52,954; have allotted to them only one Member each.

I feel that I have drawn largely upon the attention of my reader, and I will ask but one more indulgence; but I must beg of him, before we close the subject of our enquiries, to accompany me, for a few moments, into the Principality of Wales. I promise, that I am not about to bewilder him with a minute analysis of that melodious vocabulary, which,

in a separate Schedule, announces the new arrangement of political interests in that quarter; nor do I feel myself sufficiently qualified to detain him upon the most obvious claims and merits of Pwllheli and Kenfig; but I cannot wholly omit to notice it, because it affords another curious and instructive illustration of the impartial and consistent adherence to great principles; which has, as we have seen, so eminently marked every step in the course of these magnificent Reformers. It will be recollected, that many of those persons, who, persuaded that some considerable change in the distribution of the elective franchise was required, are yet anxious, that, in accomplishing this end, as little as possible of violation of existing privileges, and subversion of ancient rights, should be committed, as is compatible with its effectual attainment, have proposed, that, in lieu of an unmitigated disfranchisement, the amount of representation, possessed by the smaller Boroughs, should be retrenched, and themselves classed in united districts, in order to enlarge the objects of that representation, without, at the same time, abolishing its character.

But no; nothing could prevail with these gentlemen, as they tell us, to consent to such an inefficient and inconvenient scheme. For rea-

sons, some of which must be presumed to be conclusive, although they have not been explained, they reject with disdain any such proposal: but they no sooner find themselves within the Principality, than they submit silently to re-arrange a system of this identical form, and the following is the result:—That they establish twelve districts of contributory Boroughs, composed each of, from two to six distinct places—whereof, three even of the “Shire Towns, or principal Boroughs,” namely, Flint, Montgomery, and Radnor, and no fewer than twenty-three of their dependent associates, are below, (some of them far below,) the lowest of the previous lines of population; and therefore devoted, according to all the laws of their own distributive justice, whether dispensed in England, or in Scotland, to unconditional extinction.

I have now done. I leave it to those who have abler heads, and more practised pens,—and some of whom have already so well applied their power,—to impress upon the country the more general effects and tendencies of this presumptuous proposal. My object has been different; and I shall be satisfied, if I have contributed in any measure, however subordinate, to expose its character. Let it be remembered, that the preceding observations are but those of

an individual, whose means of information were, to say the least of it, not greater than those possessed by all who were engaged in its preparation, and of which it was their bounden duty to have made all practicable use. What more might in the same manner have been accomplished with further time, and with ampler materials, I will not undertake to say ; but I have had reason to believe, in the progress of my investigation, that I have left much untold. I know not whether I shall succeed in conveying to the minds of others those sentiments which prevail within my own, when I contemplate the attempt to beguile the country into the most momentous and most perilous change, that ever in its whole history it has approached, with less reflection, and less care than is bestowed upon its most ordinary affairs, through the preposterous absurdities of this unparalleled specimen of blindfold legislation. But I have, at least, made the endeavour. I am prepared for the only argument, which I have heard in reply to such facts and remarks as these, and of which, the frequent use is much in fashion with the abettors of the measure—that the country has declared itself, with one unanimous acclamation, and that it is in vain to reason against its undivided will. I can meet the argument, because I shall venture to dispute the facts.

Even the force which did belong to it, begins to fail them. There has been much clamour, it is true; there may have been some conversion; I know that there has been much of unreflecting panic, much of inert submission; but far more of excited ignorance, and of the universal proneness, which, upon such occasions, never fails to follow in the impetuous course of popular clamour.

But, if I protest against the efforts made to identify this contemptible compound with the essence of Reform, I will not pretend to doubt that there has arisen, upon the principle of that great problem, a sentiment throughout the nation, and among classes to whom it was not long since unknown, which leaves resistance powerless. It is with a deep consciousness of this truth, though with a no less steady conviction than before, of the real fallacy and delusion of its object, that I, among thousands else, am content now to profess myself a supporter of that question; not through blind compliance; but because I feel, that, be my own opinion what it may, the very existence of that sentiment destroys its first axiom, and that no mortal government, however excellent its form, can remain so in its practice, if its instruments be the object of distrust and discontent to the great body of the governed. But in applying a re-

medy to the evil, which in its very nature never can be final, and upon which experience can shed but little light, I assert that the man who goes one step beyond what is clearly necessary to render it effectual, trifles criminally with the most sacred interests of his country. Yet these Reformers outstrip, not only all reasonable desires, but the most extravagant expectations, to execute a scheme, of which the boldest does not venture to predict the consequences at two years' distance. Again I adjure the country to pause, and to interfere before it suffers itself to be thus hurried into the fearful speculation. I ask it to distrust it—to suspect it,—even from the very manner in which it has been proposed. It is the awfully irrevocable nature of the step that, above all, is to be dreaded. Its very advocates confess it an experiment. Yet what an experiment! One which, if it succeed, attains but that which it might have equally secured by more careful and safer methods,—but if it fail, must leave us deluded indeed, but helpless; and with no better consolation than a late and unavailing repentance, for that headlong folly, which in a moment of impatience sacrificed institutions and their securities, that have, through ages past at least, served all the highest purposes of liberty and glory.

Since the greater part of these pages was penned, some of their subject matter, as will be observed by the notes, has become no longer the same. We seem to have been treading on a kind of legislative quick-sands, of which no man can rely from day to day upon the shifting materials. Some additional documents have been produced, and certain alterations are to be made. The former, however, tend rather to confirm those observations to which they apply; the latter affect little the substance of the reasoning. I never doubted,—no one could ever doubt,—that all such objections may be remedied by alteration. Abandonment and retraction seem now to mark the usual course of legislation. How far they may be extended in this instance, it is impossible to foresee. I can only say, that if the nation is now satisfied by such means, it is not the way in which England was wont to watch the proceedings of her rulers. It may be probably a type of the method in a democratic parliament. If so, the nation is the best judge how far it is likely to be the gainer.











